



78 Beaver Road, Suite 2A, Wethersfield CT 06109-2201
860-768-1100 • Fax 860-768-1108 • www.cfba.org

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Submitted by Joan Nichols, Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

Support of SB 948 AN ACT ADDRESSING EDUCATION FUNDING AND RACIAL EQUITY IN CONNECTICUT.

Representative Sanchez, Senator McCrory, and Members of the Education Committee

Representative Walker, Senator Osten, and Members of the Appropriations Committee

Connecticut Farm Bureau Association urges your support of SB 948 particularly Sections 4 and 8 related to funding for agricultural science and technology centers. The future of Connecticut agriculture lies with our students who are interested in pursuing a career in the agricultural sector. Students who are introduced to agricultural science and technology at the high school level often pursue post-high school training and education to ready them for careers in agriculture.

SB 948 levels the funding source for students attending agricultural science and technology centers as well as other choice educational programs. Providing full, stabilized funding for students attending agricultural science and technology centers has been a legislative priority for Connecticut Farm Bureau for decades. Many of our farmer members are graduates of regional agriscience centers as are their children and employees. The skills and education gained by attending an agriscience program follows these individuals for the remainder of their lives.

According to the 2017 USDA Agricultural Census the average age of Connecticut farmers is 59 years old. Connecticut needs the next generation of farmers and farm business owners who will sustain Connecticut agricultural while bringing innovation and technology to the future of local food production. The seed starts with our agriscience and technology students. CFBA urges your support of this bill.

Connecticut Farm Bureau Association (CFBA) is a non-profit membership organization representing nearly 2,500 farming families in the state of Connecticut.